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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
INFORMATION REPORT

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REPORT NO. [REDACTED]

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COUNTRY Poland

DATE DISTR. 8 Nov 1954

SUBJECT 1. Living Conditions 2. Family Budget
3. Volume, Value, and Availability
of Consumer Goods

NO. OF PAGES 11

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THIS IS UNEVALUATED INFORMATION

General

1. [REDACTED] of only two persons, her husband and herself. There were no children. According to their positions they belonged to the class of working intelligentsia. Financially, however, they were much better off than the average family and by living on a modest scale they were able to save about 15% of their common income as well as helping other members of their families financially.

2. Because it was almost impossible to get an apartment in Pruszkow, [REDACTED] were assigned living quarters at the Psychiatric Clinic. These quarters consisted of two rooms on the second floor and were without water and other facilities. The larger room (about 4 x 6 m.) was a bed-living room and was connected to the other room (about 3 x 4 m.) by an opening in the wall. (There was no door or door frame between the two rooms.) The smaller room served as kitchen and a so-called bathroom. The bathroom, arranged in one corner, consisted of a washstand, a bucket, and a pail for water which had to be brought from the room, containing a toilet and basin, at the end of the corridor which was also used by other people. The kitchen consisted of a table, a sideboard, two small one-burner electric stoves, and a separate small electric oven for baking. The lack of gas and the poor quality of the equipment made cooking very difficult and it took a good deal of time. Opposite the apartment was a lecture room and the windows from the apartment overlooked a small garden which was filled for about three-fourths of the year with some 80 noisy patients.

3. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] 1500 hours with a short break for lunch at 1300 hours. Her husband's working hours at the clinic were [REDACTED] and in the afternoon he worked at additional jobs as lecturer for various medical courses and in the dispensary for outpatients. He also had to attend meetings. [REDACTED] and did all necessary chores such as cooking, washing, etc. herself. She had to market daily because there was no pantry or refrigerator in the apartment. The grocery stores and cooperatives in Pruszkow were not always well-supplied

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and it was often necessary to go from one store to another. This took about 1½ hours daily. Twice a week it was necessary to go by electric railway to Warsaw for those foods which were not obtainable in Pruszkow. This took about five hours. Shopping in Warsaw was always troublesome. There were long queues in all stores and it was necessary to go from one store to another to find the desired article. In addition Source had to walk because of poor public transportation. This way of life was common to the working woman in Poland and left little time for her family during the week. After preparing the supper, usually eaten between 20 and 21 hours, Source and her husband had no more than an hour for themselves before retiring between 2200 and 2300 hours. There was neither time nor facilities for any sports activities apart from a short walk in the evening. Even this walk was used as opportunity to buy vegetables from a private gardener outside of town. They seldom went to movies because this recreation, including time for travel to and from Warsaw as well as queuing for tickets, demanded about six hours. They sometimes went to the theater, securing tickets in advance from the trade union. They were usually too tired after the daily work to indulge in serious studies or even reading in the evenings. The only real recreation, Source thought, was visiting or entertaining friends at home, mostly on Saturday evenings. On Sundays they usually travelled to Warsaw and after attending church service walked around, visited exhibits or museums, or dropped in to visit relatives. Source and her husband usually spent two weeks of their yearly one-month vacation in the mountains and the rest of the time with Source's family in the country.

Income

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Additional earnings:

Fees for special typing jobs

Total Yearly Income of
Source

Total Yearly Income of Husband and Wife

Expenses

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5. The following is a breakdown of yearly expenses. This refers to the period from 1 May 1953 to 30 April 1954.

ItemExpense (yearly in zloty)

Food (List of food items purchased monthly by Source is shown in Enclosure 1.)

Eating out in restaurants and coffee houses

Entertaining including liquor

Extra expenses for food on Christmas and Easter

Cigarettes

Clothing (List of essential clothing purchased during a year and prices shown in Enclosure 2.)

Repair of clothing and shoes

Laundry (bed linen and husband's shirts)

Dry cleaning

Toilet articles

Husband's haircuts

Transportation including monthly railway tickets to Warsaw, streetcars, and taxis

Electricity

Coal (600 kg. including transport)

Gifts to family and friends

Membership fee for trade union (Source and husband)

Newspapers

Books

Recreation (movie ticket 4.50; theater ticket 10.00)

Charwoman (twice yearly)

Financial help to

Vacation

Miscellaneous

6. [redacted] able to save about 8,000 zlotys a year. This was rather exceptional for people in Poland.

7. The price of food and the most essential clothing was out of proportion to the average income of all classes of the Polish population except high Party officials. The salary of the average white-collar employee and laborer was sufficient for food and lodging only. Source gave as an example her brother-in-law, a graduate forestry engineer who was employed in the district Administration of Forests and earned about 1,200 zlotys monthly. As they had a small child, his wife was not able to work. After paying 100 zlotys for an apartment and electricity there was only enough to buy very simple food. Their average daily diet consisted of: breakfast - coffee substitute (made from barley), bread with jam, cheap sausage; lunch - thick vegetable soup, home-made macaroni or dumplings; supper - usually a milk dish or potatoes with milk, grits, and a meat dish about twice a week. Only the child received butter, eggs, fruit, and plenty of milk. This diet was all that they could afford despite the fact that [redacted] practical in money matters and a good housewife. Clothing and furniture could never be bought. Nor could they afford vacations or luxuries of any sort. They were much better off when [redacted] played since she earned about 1,300 monthly. (although she stopped working when the child was born, her salary, according to regulations, continued for four months.)

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8. Married people with no children if they were both employed were able to save a little and to buy essential clothing and furniture which were usually paid for in monthly installments. Extra but necessary items were usually bought immediately after pay day; most people were penniless the second half of the month. In order to make ends meet most people tried to find supplementary jobs. Professional people such as doctors, architects, engineers, and interior decorators, and qualified laborers found it easier to secure extra work, and it was easier in Warsaw than in rural areas. White-collar employees in small towns and villages helped themselves by keeping pigs, chickens, etc. Mothers who worked often left their children in nurseries. Those in Warsaw and other large towns had better facilities for caring for children than those in small towns and villages. Mothers were often afraid to leave their children in the nurseries in rural areas because of the inadequate care given the children. The presence of a grand-mother or an elderly aunt was regarded as a blessing by those couples who both worked because then there was someone in the home to care for the children as well as do some marketing.
9. Parcels received from relatives and friends abroad were regarded as the biggest financial help anyone could have. If someone received parcels of used clothing a few times a year he was usually regarded as being well-off. If someone received parcels of used clothing, coffee, and tea, regularly, he was regarded as a rich man.

Benefits

10. In addition to the they were, as employees lowing benefits:
- a. Free medical and dental treatment at the state dispensaries and hospitalization. They had to pay 30% of the cost of medicaments.
 - b. Free lodging at the Psychiatric Clinic. They paid the nominal fee of 0.45 zlotys per month for their apartment and had the use of some hospital furniture.
 - c. A 50% reduction on railway tickets and a reduced price for monthly tickets on the local electric railway to Warsaw. The cost was 18 zloty monthly; a single ticket cost 3.60 zloty.
 - d. Reduced wholesale price for electric current used for lighting and cooking
 - e. Free use of libraries.
 - f. Meals from the hospital kitchen. They usually ordered lunch for one person which was enough for both with the exception of meat. This meal cost 6.00 zloty daily.
 - g. Use of hospital workshops, shoe repair shop, tailor, etc., which reduced the cost of these services by about 30 - 40%.

Prices of Food and Consumer Goods

11. During the period from January to April 1954 prices of food and consumer goods were as follows:

<u>Foodstuffs</u>	<u>Price in Zloty</u>
Black bread, per kg.	approximately 2.50
White bread, per kg.	" 3.00
Luxury bread, per kg.	" 3.50
Wheat roll, one	" 0.60
Wheat flour, dark, per kg.	" 5.00
Wheat flour, white, per kg.	" 7.00

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Foodstuffs (cont.)Price in Zlotys (cont.)

Wheat flour, luxury, per kg.	approximately	8.00
Eggs, each, in summer	"	1.25
Eggs, each, in winter	"	1.35
Milk, per lit.	"	2.50
Butter, per kg.	"	55.00
Cheese, good quality, per kg.	"	35.00
Cheese, white, ordinary, per kg.	"	16.00 - 18.00
Cream, per kg.	"	18.00
Meat, per kg. (without bones)		
veal, pork or beef	"	30.00
Meat, per kg. (with bones)	"	20.00 - 25.00
Pork lard, per kg.	"	40.00
Cooking oil, per lit.	"	16.00
Margarine, per kg.	"	25.00
Sugar, per kg.	"	13.00
Rice, per kg.	"	20.00
Ham, per kg.	"	55.00
Smoked Loin, per kg.	"	55.00
Frankfurters, per kg.	"	40.00
Sausage, per kg.	"	27.00 - 55.00
Apples, per kg.	"	10.00 - 15.00
Strawberries, per kg.	"	8.00 - 12.00
Cherries, per kg.	"	10.00
Oranges, per kg.	"	40.00
Lemons, each	"	8.00 - 10.00

Luxury Foods and Liquor

Coffee, per kg.	"	380.00
Tea, per kg.	"	300.00
Cocoa, per kg.	"	340.00
Chocolate, one bar	"	20.00
Wine, one bottle (Hungarian, Russian)	"	36.00 - 45.00
Fruit wine, one bottle (Polish)	"	11.00 - 20.00
Mead, one bottle	"	30.00
Pure alcohol, 98%, one lit.	"	140.00
Vodka, 45%, one lit.	"	60.00
Vodka, export, 3/4 lit.	"	75.00
Liqueurs, Polish production, one lit.	"	75.00 - 85.00

Cigarettes

Sport - package of 10	"	1.80
Giewont - package of 20	"	3.80
Wczasowe - package of 20	"	3.60
Grunwald - package of 10	"	4.00
W-Z - package of 12	"	4.00
Poznanskie - package of 12	"	4.00
Wawel - package of 25	"	12.00
Damskie - package of 10	"	2.00
Pipe tobacco - best quality, 100 g.	"	8.00

Clothing: (new)

Wool, (very seldom obtainable) good quality, per m.	"	600.00
Wool, (seldom obtainable) gabardine, per m.	"	600.00
Wool, dress weight, per m.	"	250.00
Cotton, per m.	"	15.00
Creton, per m.	"	15.00 - 25.00
Artificial silk, per m.	"	30.00 - 50.00
Real silk, per m.	"	120.00
Poplin for men's shirts, per m.	"	35.00

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Clothing: (new) (cont.)Price in Zlotys (cont.)

<u>Clothing: (new) (cont.)</u>	<u>Price in Zlotys (cont.)</u>
Cotton flannel, per m. (obtainable in some shops since 1953)	approximately 25.00
Velvet, light weight, per m.	" 50.00
Velvet, heavy weight, per m.	" 80.00
Dress, 30% wool, one	" 120.00
Blouse, cotton with 30% wool	" 50.00 - 80.00
Dress, machine knit wool	" 1,200.00
Woman's sweater, woolen with sleeves	" 600.00
Woman's sweater, woolen without sleeves	" 300.00
Ladies' underwear	" 70.00 - 150.00
Nightgown	" 100.00
Stockings, one pair, heavy cotton	" 60.00
Stockings, silk	" 30.00
Stockings, stylon (Polish nylon)	" 50.00 - 80.00
Stockings, nylon (Western product)	" 150.00 - 200.00
Woman's hat, ordinary	" 70.00 - 150.00
Woman's hat, from exclusive shop	" 350.00
Woman's beret	" 20.00
Woman's leather sport shoes with rubber soles, one pair (Czecho- slovak or Hungarian import - seldom obtainable)	" 400.00 - 700.00
Woman's shoes, (Polish production)	" 200.00 - 300.00
Woman's sandals (mostly Czechoslovak production)	" 150.00 - 250.00
Woman's house slippers, felt or woolen material	" 30.00 - 60.00
Woolen yarn, per kg. (seldom obtainable)	" 350.00 - 420.00
Handbag, leather or nylon plastic	" 200.00 - 500.00
Men's suit, 60% wool	" 1,200.00
Shirt, poplin	" 200.00
Shirt, cotton	" 100.00
Shirt, artificial silk	" 35.00
Men's pyjamas, cotton	" 100.00
Men's pyjamas, cotton flannel	" 150.00
Socks, one pair, stylon	" 25.00
Socks, cotton	" 15.00
Tie	" 30.00 - 60.00
Tie, imported	" 120.00 - 150.00
Men's overcoat, woolen material (so-called loden)	" 600.00 - 900.00
Men's raincoat, cotton, waterproofed	" 300.00
Men's sweater, woolen, sleeveless	" 320.00
Men's gloves, leather	" 120.00
Men's shoes, leather	" 400.00 - 600.00
Men's shoes, leather with rubber soles (Polish production)	" 350.00

Secondhand clothing (received in par-
cels from abroad; was sold at the
following prices in shops):

Ladies' dress, cotton or cretone	" 150.00 - 300.00
Ladies' silk dress, very good condition	" 300.00 - 500.00
Ladies' dress, wool	" 400.00 - 700.00
Ladies' coat, wool	" 700.00 - 1400.00
Men's suit	" 600.00 - 1000.00
Ladies' slippers, one pair	" 150.00 - 250.00
Ladies' shoes, new (shoes with crepe soles were in demand and more expensive.)	" 700.00 - 900.00
Head scarf, new, silk	" 200.00 - 300.00
Nylon belt, about 6 cm. wide	" 100.00 - 130.00

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Secondhand clothing (cont.)Price in Zlotys (cont.)

Nylon belt, about 2 cm. wide	approximately	60.00
Woolen sweater or blouse	"	150.00 - 300.00

(One could obtain a higher price for secondhand clothing when selling it directly to purchaser).

Miscellaneous

Electric hot plate with one heating element	"	60.00
Set of dishes for six, without cups, medium quality	"	220.00
Washing soap, per kg.	"	20.00
Toilet soap, each cake	"	3.00 - 6.00
Toothpaste, each tube	"	3.50
Toothbrush, each	"	10.00
Lipstick in plastic case	"	15.00 - 25.00
Cologne, 100 g.	"	16.00
Lanolin cream, one jar	"	7.00 - 10.00
Perfumes (Polish production), 50 g.	"	80.00
Soir de Paris, 50 g. (French perfume)	"	300.00
Lipstick (Western product)	"	120.00 - 150.00
Lipstick (Max Factor)	"	250.00

Shops and Availability of Goods

12. The following is a list of the different kinds of state stores and cooperatives:

- a. Department stores. There was a central department store (Centralny Dom Towarowy - CDT) located in a six-story building on the corner of Bracka and Aleje Jerozolimskie streets in Warsaw. This was the largest department store in Warsaw. There were also smaller so-called general department stores (Powszechny Dom Towarowy - PDT) which carried a wide range of goods.
- b. Urban retail trade shops (Miejski Handel Detaliczny - MHD) which were grocery stores with a wide variety of foodstuffs or stores which specialized in one type of food such as meat, dairy products, fish, bakery goods, confectioner's goods, vegetables, liqueurs, delicatessen, etc.
- c. Shops controlled by Warsaw Consumer Cooperative (Warszawska Spoldzielnia Spozycow - WSS) or Pruszkow Consumer Cooperative (Pruszkowska Spoldzielnia Spozycow - PSS).
- d. Shops controlled by the Central Folk and Art Industry (Centralny Przemysl Ludowy i Artystyczny - CPLIA). These shops were very well arranged with large display windows and sold homespun materials, rugs, bed covers, wooden articles, and ceramics with peasant motifs, as well as well-tailored clothing, blouses, coats, sweaters, and shoes, brooches, bracelets, necklaces, etc. made by artists.
- e. Art works and antique shops (Dziela Sztuki i Antyki - DSA) which sold antique furniture, porcelain, and paintings.

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- f. Furniture shops controlled by the Central Trading Office of the Timber Industry (Centrala Handlowa Przemyslu Drzewnego - CHPD) which sold standard furniture of poor quality which was usually made from not properly seasoned wood.
 - g. Children's Store called "Dom Dziecka", which sold toys and clothing for children.
 - h. Coal and firewood stores.
 - i. Commission Sales Shops (Komisy) which sold all types of goods produced by private craftsmen, secondhand goods, and such products as coffee, tea, nylon stockings, etc. which were left there to be sold by persons receiving parcels from abroad.
 - j. Kiosks. There were two types: state-owned kiosks and kiosks rented from the state by private citizens. Newspapers, cigarettes, candy, and other refreshments were sold at these shops.
 - k. Peasants' Self-Help Union Cooperatives (Spoldzielnie Samopomocy Chlopskiej - SSCH). These were located in small towns and villages and sold mostly food products such as eggs and butter, household goods, and clothing worn by peasants. There was only a small variety of household goods and clothing.
 - l. Privately-owned shops. These shops still exist in Warsaw but they have almost disappeared in the provincial towns. The shops were usually very small and located in poor quarters. Mostly dairy products, eggs, poultry, vegetables, fruit, wild berries, mushrooms, walnuts, and homemade candies were sold in these shops. These were obtained from farmers and private citizens. There were also a few private haberdasheries, shoe shops, and other shops selling handmade skirts, blouses, girdles and cosmetics, as well as goods received in parcels from abroad.
13. Most of the shops were open between 0800 and 1900 hours and some from 0600 to 2100 hours. A few, usually one in each district of Warsaw, were open for 24 hours. In Warsaw most of the people shopped after office hours between 1600 and 1800 hours. As a rule the shops were very crowded at this time with the result that it took a long time to be waited on. There were too few shops to serve the population and they were unevenly scattered about the city. There were not enough salespersons and they were usually overworked. Source stated that the courtesy of the salespersons had improved of late since books in which customers wrote their complaints had been introduced in most shops.
14. On the average, shops were not really well supplied with goods and there were often periods during which certain articles were unobtainable. As far as food was concerned, one could always get flour, pearl barley and grits, sugar in the grocery stores, and usually butter. In winter, there was always a shortage of fresh eggs. Meat shops were better supplied after early 1954 but one could never get the kind of meat one wanted. There were periods during which only pork could be obtained. Sometimes one could get veal but beef could seldom be obtained. There were a few shops which sold only pluck because it was cheaper and always in demand. Fish shops sold mostly canned fish. Fresh fish, herring, and smoked fish were seldom obtainable. A few shops sold prepared food such as cutlets, chicken, pate, fish in jelly and canned meat. The prices of these foods were very high. Dairy shops were usually well supplied with produce. Bakeries were not too well supplied and during rush hours one could only buy what was left. Though green groceries were usually well supplied, there was only a small variety of fruit and the vegetables were not fresh. Candy shops were, on the average, well supplied.

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Vodka and liquor shops were very well supplied and one never had to wait to be served. Such foodstuffs as coffee, tea, cocoa, spices, lemons, oranges, olive oil, sardines, and fruit juice were not obtainable in the average grocery store. They were sold in delicatessens in Warsaw which also resold some foodstuffs received by private citizens in parcels from the West. Very good quality sausage, smoked loin, frankfurters, good quality bakery products, cream, and unsalted fresh butter were also sold in delicatessens. Until 1953 there was a market place in Warsaw where farmers sold their produce. In smaller towns such as Pruszkow there was still a market day once a week when farmers and private citizens brought foodstuffs to sell.

15. Material shops which sold woolen and cotton materials were usually well supplied with poor grade woolens, artificial silk of ugly colors, georgette, etc., which no one wanted to buy. One hundred per cent wool, flannel, cretane, and other materials of good quality were always in demand and there were usually long lines of people waiting to buy when a supply of these materials arrived. One could buy shoes in CDT, PDT, or special shoe shops which were usually well supplied with poorer quality shoes of Polish production. There was usually not much to choose from in regard to styles and sizes. From time to time shoes of Czech or Hungarian production were sold. They were of much better quality and sold very quickly. There was always a big demand for women's summer shoes. Handmade shoes were occasionally obtainable at CPLiA shops but were very expensive. Haberdashery shops usually had a very limited variety of articles and a small range in sizes. Such items as needles, thread, buttons, and lace were in poor supply. There was a constant shortage of needles, a very small choice in buttons, and a shortage of thread. Ready-made suits were obtainable at CDT, PDT, and various MHD shops. Standard types of men's suits, 60% wool, and women's suits, 30% wool, which were poorly tailored, were obtainable. Expensive, well-tailored clothing for women made from hand-woven material in foreign styles were obtainable at CPLiA shops. Tailors fees for women's suits were approximately 800 zlotys and for men's suits approximately 600 to 1,200 zlotys.

16. Household goods were very difficult to obtain. Kitchen utensils such as aluminum pots and pans and kettles were obtainable only for the exchange of woolen rags or metal scrap. [redacted] seen an aluminum or enameled pot or pan in any shop during the last two years. For four years she could not get an aluminum soup ladle. There was plenty of porcelain and glassware. However, there was a shortage of some items such as teapots, glasses, and tumblers. There was a constant shortage of electrical appliances and electric lamps. From time to time electric ovens and electric irons were available. [redacted] for six months. Soap and perfume shops were usually well supplied with Polish products. Lipstick was of poor quality.

Restaurants and Cafes

17. There were four classes of restaurants: Special class restaurants, and first, second, and third classes. Special class restaurants were the best. They were usually in the best districts, well equipped, gave good service, served good food, and were very expensive. One lunch, without an alcohol beverage, cost about 40 zlotys. There was little difference between the other three classes. Some were in new buildings and had modern equipment. The third class restaurants were usually located in small old places. There were two types of cafes, new cafes in modern buildings, usually with an orchestra; and small cafes. The prices were almost the same in both types. A cup of coffee cost about 3.50 zlotys, tea was about 2.00 zlotys, and a simple cake was about 2.00 zlotys. Fancy cakes were more expensive.

2 Enclosures:

Encl. I - List of food [redacted]

Encl. II - Essential clothing items purchased by Source and her husband in 1953 - 1954. [redacted]

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Enclosure I

List of Food Items Purchased Monthly

Approximate price in zlotys.

Bread, three kg.	10.50
Rolls, 25	50.00
Cakes, five	20.00
Butter, 2½ kg.	137.50
Eggs, 100	130.00
Cheese, better quality, ½ kg.	18.00
Cheese, white, 1 kg.	18.00
Cream, two lit.	32.00
Sugar, four kg.	52.00
Milk, one lit. daily	80.00
Flour, 3 kg.	21.00
Lard, ½ kg.	20.00
Bacon, ½ kg.	20.00
Margarine, ½ kg.	12.00
Meat, about 6 kg.	170.00
Sausage, 1 kg.	35.00
Ham, 1 kg.	55.00
Potatoes	15.00
Vegetables	30.00
Coffee substitute and spices	20.00
Tea	45.00
Fruit	100.00
Candy	30.00
Rice, 250 g.	5.00
Olive Oil, 1/8 lit.	4.00
One lunch daily at hospital canteen	170.00
TOTAL	1,303.00 zlotys

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**Essential Clothing Items Purchased
during One Year (1953-1954)****Approximate price in zlotys**

One woolen dress	800.00
Stockings:	
Two pairs, warm cotton	120.00
One pair, nylon	200.00
Two pairs of Stylon	160.00
One set ladies' underwear	120.00
One pair of cotton and wool slippers	60.00
One pair summer shoes	250.00
One nightgown	100.00
One summer dress	250.00
One woolen sweater (men's)	300.00
One pair sport shoes	500.00
One hat	150.00
Two men's shirts	250.00
Four pairs socks	100.00
One pair trousers	40.00
One pair sandals (men's)	200.00
One pair pyjamas (men's)	150.00
One pair slippers (men's)	100.00
One pair gloves	120.00
TOTAL	4,000.00 zlotys.

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